While recovering from illness at San Damiano in 1224, Francis made a discovery so revelatory that it would shake the apostolic mission of his fledgling order to the core. According to the author of the *Speculum perfectionis*, Francis emerged from his dark cell after more than fifty days of illness, impassioned with a desire to sing and preach. He composed the text and music of his *Canticle of Brother Sun*, and, after teaching it to his friars, struck upon the idea of sending Brother Pacifico and a ‘few good and spiritual brothers’ throughout the world, ‘preaching and singing the *Praises of the Lord*’. Francis enjoined them to tell their audience:

‘We are *jongleurs* of the Lord, and this is what we want as payment: that you live in true penance.’ And he said: ‘What are the servants of God if not His *jongleurs*, who must lift people’s hearts and move them up to spiritual joy.’

It is but one of the many references to music in the early biographies, and a particularly potent witness to the biographer’s plan to represent Francis as a complex musical ‘persona’. Francis’s affective piety was performative in nature, ecstatic and volatile; but, when harnessed to preaching, it had a clearly defined purpose. It is a legend, of course, part of a bio-hagiographical construct; yet Rona Goffen observes that the Franciscans, unlike the Dominicans and other orders, fostered a ‘cult of personality’ of their founder that encouraged emulation: ‘Precisely because Francis provided the example for his friars, the way in which his character was presented in art and in literature became of the utmost

concern to the order, a matter requiring deep consideration and, eventually, careful control. The Franciscan schoolmen of the thirteenth century would find inspiration in Francis’s model of singing and preaching. Reconciling their musical understanding within a system of scholastic theology, and disseminating that learning through their novice manuals, they would teach a burgeoning generation of Franciscans about the various applications of musical knowledge to a clerical avocation.

Even casual observation of their literary output reveals that the English Franciscan schoolmen were in the vanguard of music education. William of Middleton, regent master at the Universities of Paris and Cambridge, offers simple clerics and priests a concise introduction to the rites and rituals of the Mass in his *Opusculum super missam* (mid-1250s), emphasizing their affective, performative characteristics. Although Robert Grosseteste never entered the order, his ideas clearly influenced students at the University of Oxford, where he was master of arts and then the first lector of the Franciscan school (1229–1235). Roger Bacon and Bartholomew Anglicus joined the Franciscan order after their time in Oxford, and later integrated Grosseteste’s ideas about the science of music and sound. Writing in his *Opus maius* and *Opus tertium* (c. 1268), on commission to Pope Clement IV, Roger Bacon exposes music’s complex relationship with the arts and moral and natural philosophy, while explaining how this knowledge should be applied to singing and preaching. Bartholomew Anglicus wrote *De proprietatibus rerum* for students, probably the ones in his care in Paris and Magdeburg; hence, he was in an ideal position to disseminate his knowledge about music among a very large audience of aspiring Franciscan clerics. *De musica*, from book 19 of *De proprietatibus rerum*, functions essentially as a kind of encyclopaedic novice manual when read through the lens of its many glosses. Examining them together, one acquires a better appreciation of the medieval reader’s rich understanding of music from a medieval interdisciplinary, and distinctly Franciscan, perspective. A selection of these will suffice to demonstrate how readers would have used musical knowledge: to make connections between concepts that unify disparate fields of science, to understand analogically the relationships between people and to comprehend the divine rhetoric of preaching.

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4 Ibid.